Enhancing
Program Evaluation In the Office of Water

April 2003

Objectives of Briefing

- Discuss the driving forces & opportunities for internal evaluation at EPA

- Present strategy for integrating & enhancing a program evaluation function within Office of Water

I. Driving Forces for Internal Evaluation

- Government-wide Requirements & Initiatives
  - GPRA planning & reporting
  - Managing for Improved Results Steering Group
  - President's Management Agenda
    - OMB Program Assessments (PART)

- National Water Program Challenges & Opportunities
  - Growing management challenges to national water program
  - Opportunities for innovation & new approaches

- Increasing Acceptance, Interest & Need for Evaluation.
  - Recent evaluation projects add value to policy/management

I. Opportunities for Integrating Program Evaluation into EPA's Management Systems

- **Strategic Plan Revision**
  - ❖ Develop multi-year program evaluation strategy to set goals, assign responsibilities, describe relationships, identify projects.
- **Annual Planning & Reporting**
  - ❖ Synchronize evaluation planning & reporting w/ GPRA process
  - ❖ Set annual objectives, identify areas of concern, propose projects
- **Budget Formulation**
  - ❖ Propose evaluation topics & include results in budget documents
  - ❖ Prepare for OMB's Program Assessment Ratings Tool (PART)
- **Managing for Improved Results Steering Group**
  - ❖ Integrate evaluation in Regional planning/priority setting
  - ❖ Conduct joint HQ-RO evaluation projects as part of mutual accountability

I. Opportunities for Integrating Program Evaluation Into EPA's Management Systems

- **HQ-RO MOA**
  - Include evaluation proposals and results in annual performance assessments
- **NEPPS, Program Grants, & Cooperative Agreements**
  - Include evaluation requirements in PPA/PPG guidance
- **Program/Regional Reviews & National Meetings**
  - Use program reviews and national meetings to identify emerging national program areas of concern & potential solutions
  - Request for evaluation project proposals & report on evaluation results

II. Program Evaluation Strategy for OW

- Set evaluation goal & objectives

- Describe evaluation functions, roles, & process

- Characterize relationships w/ planning & accountability systems

- Identify resource commitments/needs

- Schedule short-term action items

II. Program Evaluation Strategy for OW
A. Evaluation Goal

- To improve the design, implementation, and effectiveness of the National Water Program's policies, programs, and management systems.

  - Better & more timely information for decision-making
  - Support a culture of program improvement & adaptive management
  - Identify opportunities for investments, re-engineering, & redeployment

II. Program Evaluation Strategy for OW
B. Objectives

- Establish an on-going, internal process for identifying, selecting, and funding evaluation projects.

- Enhance OW's capability to provide technical & coordination support for managers and project leaders on evaluation tools and methods.

II. Program Evaluation Strategy for OW
C. Functions, Roles, & Process

- **Annual Planning & Project Development**
  - ◆ IO staff works w/ Offices/Regions to create annual evaluation plan
  - ◆ Offices/Regions identify areas of concern/info needs, evaluation projects & resource commitments & needs
  - ◆ DAA transmits plan to OW/Regional managers

- **Project Implementation/Management**
  - ◆ Offices, Regions & IO (if necessary) conduct evaluation projects
  - ◆ IO staff facilitates communication among projects

II. Program Evaluation Strategy for OW
C. Functions, Roles, & Process

- Capacity Building
  - IO provides evaluation training for interested managers/staff on evaluation (consumers & producers)
  - IO provides access to contractors/experts for project design & implementation (e.g., survey design)
  - Information sharing through periodic meetings/emails on tools, events, & examples.

II. Program Evaluation Strategy for OW
D. Resources

- IO, Office, Lead-Region staff assignments for plan development

- HQ & RO Division-level staff as evaluation project leaders

- Extramural funding support from IO, Offices, & OCFO/OPEI (e.g., cost sharing) for project management & technical support

III. Short-Term Action Items

- Roll out evaluation strategy (March-April 2003)
  - ◆ Memo from DAA to OD/DD supporting strategy
  - ◆ Convene OW-wide meeting w/ DD on strategy

- Begin capacity building efforts (April-May 2003)
  - ◆ Workshops for interested managers/staff on evaluation & project design
  - ◆ Access to outside experts for analytical support

II. Short-Term Action Items

- Develop annual evaluation plan (May-June 2003)
  - IO staff meets with OD & RO plan representatives
  - HQ-RO management proposes & selects evaluation projects
  - DAA distributes plan
- Begin implementation of annual plan (July 2003)
  - OD's & RO's dedicate resources/funds for projects
  - Offices/Regions begin implementation of evaluation projects

Appendix I
Performance Measurement vs. Program Evaluation

Performance Measurement	On-going	Monitoring & reporting	Whether program is meeting goals/objectives	Track Outputs & Outcomes
Program Evaluation	One time or periodic	Assessment	Whether processes are working as intended. Why program is/ is not meeting goals/objectives.	Relationship among activities, outputs & outcomes

Appendix II
Three Primary Uses of Evaluation Findings

- Judge Merit or Worth

  Summative Evaluation
  Accountability
  Audits
  Quality Control
  Cost Benefit Decisions
  Decide a Program's Future

- Improve Programs

  Formative Evaluation
  Identify Strengths & Weaknesses
  Continuous Improvement
  Quality Enhancement
  Being a Learning Organization
  Manage More Effectively

- Generate Knowledge

  Generalizations About Effectiveness
  Extrapolate Principles on What Works
  Theory Building
  Synthesize Pattern Across Programs
  Policy Making